

SPORT FISHING

Emergency Order

ALASKA DEPARTMENT
OF FISH & GAME

Under Authority of AS 16.05.060

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-23-18

Issued at: Palmer, Wednesday, June 20, 2018

Effective Date: 6:00 a.m. Friday, June 22, 2018

Expiration Date: 11:59 p.m. Friday,
July 13, 2018, unless superseded by
subsequent emergency order.

EXPLANATION:

This emergency order supersedes Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-15-18, issued in Palmer on Wednesday, June 13, 2018. This emergency order closes the Little Susitna River to sport fishing for king salmon and limits sport fishing gear to one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure when fishing for other species. The closure prohibits sport fishing for king salmon, including catch-and-release fishing. King salmon may not be taken or possessed; king salmon incidentally caught while fishing for other species may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately. The area affected by this emergency order includes all waters of the Little Susitna River from its confluence with Cook Inlet upstream to the Parks Highway Bridge.

REGULATION:

The provisions of 5 AAC 60.122 (9)(A) and (B) are superseded by this emergency order. Under this emergency order, the following provisions are effective 6:00 a.m. Friday, June 22 through 11:59 p.m. Friday, July 13, 2018:

5 AAC 60.12. Special provisions for the seasons, bag, possession, annual, and size limits, and methods and means for the Knik Arm Drainages Area.

(9) in the Little Susitna River drainage,

(A) from June 20 – July 13, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, sport fishing for king salmon is closed; king salmon may not be taken or possessed; king salmon caught may not be removed from the water and must be released immediately;

(B) from June 20 – July 13, in flowing waters from its mouth upstream to the Parks Highway, only one unbaited, single-hook, artificial lure may be used;

Sam Cotten
Commissioner

By delegation to:

Sam Ivey
Area Management Biologist

JUSTIFICATION:

Emergency Order 2-KS-2-15-18 was issued on Wednesday, June 13, 2018, to close the Little Susitna River to the retention of king salmon due to low daily weir counts, below average harvest rates, and an observed low abundance of 5-year old fish. High water has prevented counting through the weir since this EO was issued. However, monitoring of Susitna River projects, including the Deshka River weir and a project to estimate the abundance of king salmon on the Susitna River, indicate a weak run of king salmon and low abundance of 5-year old fish, which typically make up about half of the run on any given year. A poor return of 5-year old fish has been substantiated by guide and angler reports across the Susitna and Little Susitna drainages. Other areas of Cook Inlet and the state are experiencing low returns of older age classes leading to widespread closures of Cook Inlet king salmon sport fisheries. In addition, all indices of abundance indicate king salmon run strength in the Little Susitna and Susitna drainages to be lower than anticipated at the outset of the season. Further, anticipated shifts in effort due to closing all Susitna River sport fisheries through a separate emergency order is likely to put more pressure and increase release mortality of the Little Susitna king stock. Therefore, it is prudent to conserve all king salmon returning the Little Susitna River to provide the greatest potential for achieving the escapement goal in 2018.

PREVIOUS EMERGENCY ORDERS AFFECTED:

Emergency Order No. 2-KS-2-15-18, which prohibited the retention of king salmon in the Little Susitna River from June 15 – July 13, 2018, is superseded by this emergency order.

DISTRIBUTION:

The distribution list for this emergency order is on file at the Region II Office of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518, (907) 267-2218.